



Maine Real Estate &
Development Association

Supporting Responsible Development

Testimony in Support

LD 2164, “An Act to Assist Communities with Converting Vacant School Buildings into Housing”

February 10, 2026

Chairman Curry, Chairwoman Gere, and Honorable Members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee;

My name is Elizabeth Frazier, and I am testifying on behalf of the Maine Real Estate and Development Association (MEREDA) in strong support of LD 2164, legislation that would establish the Vacant School Housing Conversion Program and associated Maine School Conversion Fund to help communities transform closed and unused school buildings into residential housing.

MEREDA has long advocated for creative, community-centered solutions to expand Maine’s housing supply. This bill exemplifies the type of *innovative reuse* that can help alleviate housing shortages while preserving community heritage and reducing development costs. By empowering the Maine Redevelopment Land Bank Authority to provide technical and financial assistance for feasibility analysis, environmental remediation, regulatory navigation, and project structuring, LD 2164 reduces barriers that often prevent thoughtful redevelopment of existing structures.

Vacant school buildings are found across the state and represent significant untapped potential. Converting these existing assets into housing — including units dedicated as affordable housing — honors past community investments and aligns with sustainable development principles. Adaptive reuse like this not only advances housing creation but drives economic activity in local markets and enhances community vitality. It has an added bonus – it retains carbon by preventing teardowns and construction with virgin materials.

The establishment of a dedicated conversion fund, backed with ongoing resources, gives municipalities and developers a predictable framework to undertake these challenging projects. This approach leverages public-private collaboration and unlocks creative financing strategies, which are essential in today’s housing environment.

For these reasons, MEREDA strongly supports LD 2164 and encourages the Committee to vote *Ought to Pass*. We appreciate your leadership on housing issues and welcome ongoing dialogue about implementation strategies that maximize impact for Maine communities.

Thank you.

Elizabeth Frazier

On behalf of Maine Real Estate & Development Association

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